

SDC's Approach to Governance

- **Introduction** to the conceptual and practical guidance documents
- **Part 1** Governance in the SDC
Conceptual guidance
Definitions, approach and priorities
- **Part 2** Governance as transversal theme
A practical guide
Integrating governance in SDC sectors and priority themes
- **Part 3** Governance in health
A practical guide

Published in 2017



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**



SDC NETWORK

**Democratisation, Decentralisation
and Local Governance**

The SDC's Approach to Governance

Introduction to the Conceptual and Practical Guidance Documents

Governance determines the foundations, politics and functionality of a state and the global development agenda. As such it constitutes a key element for the SDC's development work both in partner countries and at the global level. It is crucial for supporting democratic transition processes and for rebuilding state foundations in fragile, conflict or post-conflict situations.

1. Supporting SDC staff and partners

The series of guidance documents that have been produced are intended for **SDC development practitioners** at head office and in cooperation offices, but also for **partner organisations**, to assist them in approaching governance in a more coherent and systematic way throughout the project cycle management process and within their own and partner institutions/organisations.

2. The need for conceptual and practical guidance

Over the years the SDC has developed sound experience in addressing governance issues and is producing solid and sustainable results. It has developed core competence in several governance dimensions and plays an influential role in partner countries and at the global level. There is nevertheless a need to better reflect recent developments and trends (globally and within the SDC) in this thematic field and to provide stronger guidance on how to integrate governance aspects more systematically into operational work.¹ As a consequence the SDC needs to update current governance definition, and provide corresponding conceptual and practical guidance. That is the ambition of the series of guidance documents which describe how the SDC is positioned today and explain how it perceives different governance dimensions and the thematic priorities in the governance domain, as well as their intersections. The documents also provide practical guidance and examples of how to integrate all this into the SDC's operational work.

The notions of politics and power, legitimacy of state institutions and people's trust in them, as well as the need for collaborative and inclusive governance arrangements, have become much more significant in recent years. This is particularly important in fragile and conflict contexts where the SDC is stepping up its engagement. Furthermore, much greater emphasis is now put on a systemic perspective of governance, which implies working strategically with multiple actors at multiple levels (from sub-national to national to global levels) and systematically fostering respective interlinkages. The SDC strives to combine interventions in partner countries

¹ See findings of the independent evaluation on SDC's Performance in Governance Programming and Mainstreaming, March 2015 E.T. Jackson and Associates Ltd., Ottawa – Canada

with governance related discussions/initiatives at the global level, and it tries to partner with and influence multilateral organisations in their governance approaches. The SDC is also acting in Switzerland to promote the coherence of Swiss policies that affect governance in partner countries and globally, (the SDC's engagement in combatting illicit financial flows is a case in point).

The ultimate goal is to foster the effectiveness and sustainability of SDC programmes in terms of reducing poverty and inequalities, promoting the protection and fulfilment of human rights and enabling peaceful co-existence.

3 Structure and content

The updated governance guide is divided into **three main parts** contained in three separate **working documents** that build on an earlier version of a guide for implementing governance as a transversal theme.²

The three documents offer the following:

- **Governance in the SDC – Definitions, Approach and Priorities:** this document explains the SDC's definition of and approach to governance, and describes the thematic priorities that constitute the governance domain, including their intersections. It also provides a glossary of related key terms.
- **Governance as a transversal theme – A practical guide to integrating governance in SDC sectors/priority themes:** this document provides a guiding framework to assess governance shortcomings and identify entry points/change areas. It explains how to integrate governance along the PCM steps and provides numerous concrete examples and an overview of SDC analytical tools.
- **A series of sector-specific practical guidance papers for specific sectors/priority themes.** The first guidance paper focuses on health; guidance papers on other sectors/priority themes are already under way.

The three documents integrate current best practice principles and are intended to be used as **working documents**. As such they do not provide much information about the global development agenda and the approaches of other development partners, nor do they describe in detail the significance of governance for Switzerland's policy, or the SDC's future strategic priorities in this thematic domain. These aspects will be elaborated in a subsequent SDC governance policy document (normative "Leitdokument B").

The documents also examine in less detail how to integrate governance in institutions and organisations because it goes beyond the mandate and know-how of the thematic unit in charge (SDC thematic unit for democratisation, decentralisation and local governance, DDLG).

The documents are structured in a way that they can be read in isolation from each other. If time permits it, however, we recommend reading all three documents to gain a full and integrated understanding.

² Governance as a Transversal Theme – an implementation guide, SDC 2007.

4. Support for implementation

The thematic unit/network for democratisation, decentralisation and local governance (DDLGN) has the mandate to enhance the integration of governance as a transversal theme, and is at the same time responsible for a number of the SDC's thematic priorities within the governance domain (specifically those related to DDLG). In collaboration with other concerned thematic units/networks it is committed to supporting the implementation of these guidance documents, for example through seminars, advisory services and analysis during PCM milestones.